

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 111113
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY L/PM: J H SMITH:RR
APPROVED BY L: L R MARKS
EUR W LUERS
ARA/CCA W SMITH
S/S:FWISNER

-----126744 020220Z /65

O 020142Z MAY 78 ZFF6
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 111113

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1, 2

TAGS:CU, GW, UR, CASC

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH VOGEL CONCERNING POSSIBLE
LUNT-LEBRON TRADE

1. ON THURSDAY, APRIL 27, CONGRESSMAN GILMAN MET WITH
WOLFGANG VOGEL TO DISCUSS DETAILS VAN NORMAN-THOMPSON TRADE
IN BERLIN. SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE LUNT-LEBRON PRISONER
EXCHANGE WAS ALSO DISCUSSED. JEFFREY SMITH (L/PM) ATTENDED
AS AN OBSERVER.

2. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN ROOM 236 OF THE CAPITOL. ALSO
ATTENDING WERE J. KALMANOWITCH, AN ISRAELI INTERMEDIARY,
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AND DEPARTMENT INTERPRETER. VOGEL OPENED THE MEETING BY
MAKING THE FOLLOWING THREE POINTS CONCERNING THE POSSI-
BILITY OF A LUNT-LEBRON TRADE. VOGEL SAID HE HAD NOT TALKED
TO THE CUBANS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, BUT HE KNEW THAT THEY
DID NOT WANT TO TIE THE RELEASE OF THOMPSON TO LUNT IN
ANY MANNER. HE SAID THE CUBANS HAD ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST
IN THOMPSON. VOGEL HAD THREE SPECIFIC POINTS. (A)

WITHIN TWO WEEKS HE WOULD GIVE TO CONGRESSMAN GILMAN THE NAME OF A PERSON FROM CUBA WHO WOULD HAVE A MANDATE FROM CASTRO TO TALK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LUNT-LEBRON TRADE; (B) ALSO WITHIN TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS RETURN TO BERLIN, VOGEL WOULD GET WORD TO CONGRESSMAN GILMAN WHETHER GILMAN

WOULD BE INVITED TO CUBA OR WHETHER THE CUBAN WOULD COME TO THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN THESE DISCUSSIONS. GILMAN ASKED WHETHER THAT COULD BE AT HIS DISCRETION. VOGEL ANSWERED THAT IT COULD BE AT GILMAN'S DISCRETION IF HE WISHED; (C) TECHNICAL DETAILS; WHERE DOES LEBRON WISH TO GO IF SHE WERE RELEASED, AND IS THE U.S. SERIOUS ABOUT SUCH A TRADE? IT WAS EVIDENT FROM VOGEL'S REMARKS THAT HE BELIEVED THAT UNLESS WE WERE SERIOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A TRADE, AND UNLESS THE CUBANS WERE SATISFIED WITH WHERE LEBRON MIGHT WISH TO GO AND WHAT HER PLANS MIGHT BE, THEY WOULD NOT PROCEED EVEN TO MAKE US A FORMAL OFFER TO NEGOTIATE. VOGEL ADDED THAT WE (THE U.S.) SHOULD TRY TO WORK OUT THESE DETAILS WITHIN TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO HIS GIVING GILMAN THE LETTER.

3. AT THIS POINT, WAINRIGHT AND HOFFMAN, LAWYERS FOR THOMPSON, ENTERED THE ROOM. FROM THAT POINT ON, THE DISCUSSION RAMBLED ON WITHOUT MUCH PURPOSE. WAINRIGHT AND HOFFMAN WERE ANXIOUS TO GET AS MUCH AS THEY COULD OUT OF THOMPSON'S RELEASE, BUT VOGEL REITERATED THAT THERE
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WAS NOTHING IN IT FOR THE CUBANS OR FOR LUNT. THERE WAS ALSO DISCUSSION OF THE ABORTIVE 1975 ATTEMPT TO TRADE THOMPSON FOR LEBRON. HOFFMAN MADE THE POINT THAT, AS GENERAL COUNSEL FOR DEPT. OF DEFENSE, HE HAD EVEN TRAVELED TO HAVANA TO PICK UP LUNT. VOGEL SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THIS, BUT THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN 1975 SO HE COULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE. CONGRESSMAN GILMAN SAID THAT HE BELIEVED IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE INITIAL CONTACTS BE MADE ON AN INFORMAL, AND NON-OFFICIAL BASIS. HE ADDED THAT IT COULD THEN BE TURNED OVER TO THE DEPT. OF STATE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA FOR DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS. SMITH MADE THE POINT THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE MERELY TO LISTEN, BUT HE CAUTIONED THAT GILMAN, VOGEL, AND THAT ATTORNEYS FOR THOMPSON SEEMED TO BE PROCEEDING AS IF THERE WERE AGREEMENT ON THE PART OF THE U.S. AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN NO DECISIONS YET, AND THAT ANY SUCH DECISIONS MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME. VOGEL SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND COULD NOT EXPECT ANYTHING ELSE.

4. GILMAN FINALLY CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION BY ASKING SMITH WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WANTED GILMAN TO CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS OR WHETHER THE DEPT. PREFERRED

TO CONDUCT THEM THEMSELVES. SMITH SAID THAT EITHER WAS ACCEPTABLE, THAT WHEN LUERS AND SMITH HAD MET WITH GILMAN, WE HAD DEFERRED TO WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS THE CONGRESSMAN'S DESIRE TO MAKE THE INITIAL CONTACT AND THEN TURN THE DETAILS OVER TO US. GILMAN SAID THAT HE WAS

PREPARED TO STEP ASIDE AND LET THE DIRECT CONTACTS BE BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE CUBAN INTERESTS SECTION. VOGEL SAID THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO HIM, BUT THAT HE FELT THAT THE OTHER CASE (VAN NORMAN-THOMPSON) SHOULD PROCEED BECAUSE THAT WOULD SET A GOOD CLIMATE FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A LUNT-LEBRON TRADE. GILMAN ADDED THAT HE WANTED VOGEL TO STAY WITH NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL THE END, AND VOGEL
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AGREED TO DO SO. VOGEL SAID THAT THE CUBANS WANTED TO CONSUMMATE THE DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE USG, BUT WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THE "ANTE" IS BEFORE THEY ASK IT BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT ANY PROPOSED DEALS TO FALL THROUGH EVEN BEFORE DISCUSSIONS BEGAN. AT THAT POINT, IT WAS AGREED THAT THE DISCUSSION HAD GONE AS FAR AS IT COULD GO.

5. COMMENT: VOGEL WAS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL OF HIS SITUATION AND KNEW HIS INSTRUCTIONS. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT VOGEL MEANT BY HIS INITIAL REFERENCE THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE CUBANS IN A FEW WEEKS. IN OTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM, IT SEEMED THAT HE WAS IN TOUCH DIRECTLY WITH THE CUBANS THROUGH THEIR AMBASSADOR TO EAST BERLIN. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY FRUSTRATED BY THE ANTICS OF WAINRIGHT AND HOFFMAN. HE WAS RELIEVED WHEN THEY LEFT AND MADE UNCOMPLIMENTARY REMARKS ABOUT WAINRIGHT. THE DEPT. WILL BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH JUSTICE ON A CONTINGENCY BASIS TO DETERMINE WHAT POSSIBILITIES MIGHT EXIST FOR RELEASE, OR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE OF LEBRON. WE WILL ADVISE YOU SOONEST OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

5. REF HAVANA'S COMMENTS, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID SOME PUBLICITY SINCE NEWSWEEK WAS ON TO STORY EVEN BEFORE FINAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR THOMPSON-VAN NORMAN EXCHANGE GOT UNDERWAY. ON POSSIBILITY OF LUNT-LEBRON EXCHANGE, WHICH WAS MENTIONED IN NEWSWEEK ARTICLE, DEPT. HAS SAID ONLY THAT THERE WAS NOTHING DEFINITE AND THAT IT HAS NO COMMENT. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRISONER EXCHANGE, CAT-B, PRISONERS RELEASE, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE111113
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: J H SMITH:RR
Enclosure: DC IS ALSO X1
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850004-1699
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805101/aaaadisa.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b02dd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2516810
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH VOGEL CONCERNING POSSIBLE LUNT-LEBRON TRADE
TAGS: CASC, PINS, GE, UR, US, CU, BE, (GILMAN, BENJAMIN A), (VOGEL, WOLFGANG), (VAN NORMAN, ALAN STUART), (THOMPSON, ROBERT), (LUNT, LAWRENCE K), (LEBRON, LO LITA)
To: HAVANA BERLIN MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b02dd593-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014